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ABSTRACT

The use of student lectures as an integrative language learning approach for university level English as second language students is described. Student lectures pair decoding skills with encoding skills through five steps: selecting an article of interest, reading the article and taking notes on it, using the notes to prepare an oral report, presenting the report by following the notes, and answering listeners' questions. Fourteen variations on this approach are discussed: (1) analyzing the speaker's notes, (2) reconstructing the lecture from a listener's notes, (3) evaluating the listeners' notes on the lecture, (4) using listeners' notes as peer feedback, (5) administering a quiz on lecture content, (6) written reconstruction, (7) oral reconstruction, (8) group discussion, (9) observing aspects of the speaker's delivery, (10) tape recording the lecture, (11) videotaping the lecture, (12) basing the lecture on a radio broadcast rather than an article, (13) inviting a guest lecturer to speak, and (14) having the teacher deliver the lecture. (RW)

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Student Lectures for Integrative Language Learning*

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Listening is a silent skill which educators regard as nonetheless active. What do ESL students think? Do they perceive their role in listening class as an active one?

At least one student at the Intensive English Institute, University of Illinois, did not. His suggestion that students participate more actively in their ESL listening class led to the development of this integrative activity.

It is the integrative nature of Student Lectures which offers language learners greater involvement. It does so by pairing decoding skills with encoding skills. A student reads an article (decoding) and takes notes (encoding). The student refers to these notes (decoding) while giving a mini-lecture on the article (encoding). The other students listen (decoding) and take notes (encoding). Other activities follow. The transfer of information thus occurs very much as it does in human interaction, changing from one mode to another in a cyclical fashion. This integration of skills mirrors the communicative process.

In addition, Student Lectures assigns high priority to content without neglecting form. Students focus first on the information which is being communicated and later on the form in which it is presented. Topics are chosen by the students themselves, thus assuring diversity and relevance. Students in effect assess their own motivational needs as they select material for their lectures.

The five basic steps of Student Lectures involve the skills of reading, speaking, listening, and notetaking. Each of the fourteen variations provides an additional skill emphasis. It is left to the discretion and imagination of teachers--and students--to fit the activity to their instructional needs.

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Student Lectures: Instructions to Students

Step 1. Select an article of interest to you and your classmates. The article might appear in a newspaper, magazine, or journal.

Step 2. Read the article and take notes on a separate paper.

Step 3. Prepare an oral report on the article using only your notes as a guide. Limit your presentation to five minutes.

Step 4. Present the report as a lecture in class referring to and following your notes. (Do not read or memorize your speech.)

Step 5. Answer any questions the listeners may ask following the lecture.

Variations: Instructions to Teachers

Variation I. Styles of Notetaking

Before the lecture, make copies of the speaker's notes for all members of the class. After the lecture, have the speaker distribute the copies and answer any questions the listeners may have about (1) the symbols and abbreviations used and (2) the organizational devices.

Variation II. Model Notes

After the lecture, ask one student listener to orally reconstruct the lecture using his/her notes as a guide. Instruct the other students to make any additions or corrections after the student has finished. As the student orally reconstructs the lecture, take notes on the blackboard for all to see. Then point out the symbols, abbreviations, and organizational devices which you used in your notes.

Variation III. Evaluation of Notes

After the lecture, collect the students' notes and analyze them in terms of (1) organization, (2) completeness, (3) conciseness, and (4) accuracy. This will give you information about the students' notetaking proficiency level and about

their instructional needs.

Variation IV. Peer Feedback

After the lecture, have the speaker collect the listeners' notes. For homework, the speaker should analyze the notes for accuracy and completeness. This will offer feedback to the speaker on how well the listeners understood his/her meaning.

Variation V. Information Retrieval

Administer a quiz on the content of the lecture and on the content of any previous class lectures as well. Students refer to their notes, thus testing the usefulness of the notes for information storage and retrieval. Students should be reminded to save all class notes and to bring them to class regularly.

Variation VI. Written Reconstruction

After the lecture, have students reconstruct the lecture in paragraph form using their notes as a guide.

Variation VII. Oral Reconstruction

After the lecture, have student reconstruct the lecture orally in pairs using their notes as a guide.

Variation VIII. Seminar

In preparation, make copies of the article and distribute them to all class members. Assign the article as reading homework. Select one student to prepare an oral summary and evaluation of the article. The day of the presentation, arrange the seats in a circle or around a table. The speaker should sit with the group. After the formal presentation, all students should join in discussing the article.

Variation IX. Public Speaking

During the lecture, have the listeners observe one specific aspect of the speaker's pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, organization, or nonverbal communication (e.g. gestures, eye contact, body movement). Which aspect to observe can be communicated secretly to the listeners before the speech begins. After the lecture, have students report their observations. Discuss the role of that aspect in effective public speaking.

Variation X. Tape Recorded Playback

Tape record the lecture as it is delivered. Schedule a private conference with the student lecturer. At the conference, replay the tape and offer feedback on the verbal aspects of his/her delivery.

Variation XI. Videotaped Playback

Videotape the lecture as it is delivered. Schedule a private conference with the student lecturer. At the conference, replay the videotape and offer feedback on the verbal and nonverbal aspects of his/her delivery. The videotape can be replayed both with and without the audio track.

Variation XII. Spoken Media

Have the students base their lectures on notes taken from a radio or television broadcast rather than from an article.

Variation XIII. Guest Lecturer

Invite a student from another class or a person from outside the ESL program to speak. If the lecturer is a native speaker of English, consider tape recording or videotaping and even doing a partial transcription of the lecture. Then analyze in class the verbal and nonverbal aspects of discourse in the lecture.

Variation XIV. Teacher as Lecturer

Use the Student Lecture technique yourself in class both for the introduction

of language learning skills and to share topics of interest with the students. This technique will familiarize students with a lecture style which includes both the structure of a prepared lecture and the spontaneity of free speech.